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The Hague Conference.

It is impossible as yet to give any more definite information either as to the exact date of the assembling of the Hague Conference or as to the final nature of the program. Mr. Frederick de Martens, who, as is well known, is visiting as the Czar's envoy the capitals of Europe to discuss with the governments the question of the date and the details of the program, has announced that the middle of June seems, from all that he has learned, to be the most agreeable date for the opening. But no official announcement has yet been made to this effect.

We do not think there is any ground for the suggestion, still occasionally heard, that the Conference will not meet at all this year. The governments have practically all expressed themselves in favor of the meeting. At the opening of the new Reichstag last month, the German Emperor, who, because of his attitude in the Conference of 1899, has been supposed to be cold hearted about the coming one, expressed his warm approval of the holding of the Conference. The following statement given out by Mr. de Martens, on his arrival in London, as to the progress of his mission and the prospects of the Con-

ference, gives an excellent idea of the whole subject, from both the encouraging side and the more pessimistic outlook:

"I have so far consulted three powers,—Germany, the United States and France,—and I am very satisfied with the display of goodwill which I have found everywhere, and the readiness to help the Conference. The second Peace Conference, which is to assemble at The Hague in June, will be unique in the history of international relations. While at the first Conference only twenty-six powers were represented, the delegates of forty-six powers will meet under the same roof to discuss questions of mutual interest. Of course, there can be no doubt of the fact that the question of disarmament and the limitation of armaments will be the *pièce de résistance* of the program, and if either the British or the United States government has really decided to place this question on the agenda of the Conference the powers will be obliged to discuss it. I cannot imagine that any one power would make this question the cause of serious political complications. Personally my feeling is that the matter is not yet ripe for discussion, and I am quite convinced that at the present moment it will be quite impossible to attain any practical result from its discussion. I cannot see how the powers could disarm or how they could limit their armaments.

"At the same time I think it absolutely necessary, in order to guarantee the success of the labors of the Conference, that before it meets this question or any other matter which is to be brought forward should be known by all the powers represented, so that the necessary instructions may be given to the various delegates. There must be no surprises at the Conference, and the representative of every power must know exactly what is to be discussed and what are the results desired by the government he represents. Every resolution passed by the Conference will have obligatory force if unanimity prevails, but not a single power can be forced by a majority of votes. This is a further reason why there should not be complicated discussions and why the Conference should be carried on in a spirit of harmony and mutual goodwill.

"With regard to the results of my mission so far, I may say that Germany, France and Russia all hold that the question of disarmament is not yet ripe for discussion, and further that, even the limitation of armaments not being a practical question, no good can come from the discussion of it.

"The United States has reserved the right of placing the question of disarmament before the Conference, but I have not heard as yet whether the Washington government has actually decided to do this or not.

"I repeat what I have said on previous occasions, that the one desire of the Czar—his most sincere wish—is

to prevent anything of the nature of misunderstanding or bad feeling on this occasion, and that the Conference should have a real and practical value."

Turning to the question of the Drago doctrine, Mr. de Martens said:

"This matter has provoked some misunderstanding and bad feeling. If the Drago doctrine is to form a guarantee that any power need not pay its debts, naturally it will not evoke very much sympathy, and from this point of view it will not be approved. Even in the United States the Drago doctrine was accepted by Mr. Hay, the late Secretary of State, with considerable reserve. If, on the other hand, the Drago doctrine will have the effect of referring to The Hague, instead of settling by force, questions which can be adjusted by arbitration, it cannot be otherwise than very useful."

Asked as to his views concerning the results of the Conference, Mr. de Martens remarked:

"I should say that my mission is not connected with the utopian ideas of eternal and permanent peace which seem to exist in some quarters. Such a matter must be left for the future. I am looking quite hopefully to the results of the Conference, because this will be the first occasion on which the civilized nations of the world have met together in a time of peace, not as the result of force but of their own free will, to legislate on their mutual relations. This is a great and noteworthy fact and shows that they are coming together under circumstances quite unknown in the history of international relations. I have, as I have said, the best hopes as to the results, but of course one cannot guarantee them, and some skepticism is perhaps unavoidable. All the questions to be put before the Conference have in view the matter of peace — the peace of the world.

"The first half of the program concerns especially means for the prevention of war by international inquiry, meditation, or arbitration. The second part has in view the limitation of the operations of war, by defining as far as is practicable the rights and duties of neutrals. It is really in the interests of all the nations of the world that the safety of navigation and commerce, which in time of war is always endangered, should be guaranteed in a much better fashion than has hitherto been the case.

"It is expected that the Conference will meet at The Hague in the middle of June and will probably sit for two months."

From this statement it is clear that the governments are looking forward with great interest to the Conference, that they will all be represented in it, that two important classes of questions will be by general agreement taken up and discussed, and that the only subject which has been proposed for discussion on which there is hesitation and disagreement is the subject of limitation of armaments.

Mr. de Martens has, since leaving London, visited The Hague, Rome and Vienna, and he may have discovered that in the meantime the subject of limitation of armaments has ripened a good deal. For the British Prime Minister has since declared anew, in

the most unequivocal terms, that it is the purpose of his government to have this subject discussed in the Conference, if it is at all possible. Italy, it is well known, stands solidly with the British government in this matter, and there is strong ground to believe now that our own government will do so likewise. If, therefore, the subject is not put upon the program in advance, it will be introduced when the Conference meets. And when it comes up, not only the majority of the great powers, but all the small powers, will range themselves with Great Britain, and the subject will be voted a practical one of the first order. The subject is too urgent, and too deep and widespread an interest is taken in it, to permit one easily to believe that it will be kept out of the Conference, because two or three powers think it not ripe.

Meanwhile the people in all the countries are being heard from, on the four or five great subjects which the Conference ought to consider, and as the voice of the people saved the first Hague Conference from failure and made it an unexpected and far-reaching success, so it will be again, in far greater measure, we do not doubt, when the representatives of *all the nations of the world* meet at The Hague in June, look into each other's faces and feel the mighty mandate of humanity resting upon them.

The Japanese Once More.

The San Francisco school trouble over the Japanese children has been settled,—apparently; but the settlement has revealed the true purpose of the San Franciscans in bringing on the crisis, namely, hereafter to keep the Japanese workmen out altogether. If the compromise agreed upon by President Roosevelt and the California delegation, and proposed to be embodied in the new treaty with Japan, shall be carried out, as the Californians evidently wish, in such a way as finally to exclude from the country all Japanese laborers both unskilled and skilled, the final result will be that but few Japanese will be left in the State. Nearly all of the Japanese who come over to our western coast are of these two classes. The San Francisco school authorities will therefore have had their way in spite of President Roosevelt's efforts, or rather with his coöperation. The opening of the schools again to the Japanese children will mean next to nothing, for in time there will be almost no Japanese children to enter them.

The whole boasted settlement seems to us one that settles nothing. It is a settlement on an iniquitous basis. Mutually to exclude from the two countries all laborers both unskilled and skilled, or to put it into the President's hands to do this for our country, in the case of those traveling abroad with passports, is radically and flagrantly wrong. It is against the fundamental principles of human